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A N .
E S S A Y
ON THE
E V I D E N C E,
EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL,
RELATING TO THE
P O E M S
ATTRIBUTED TO
T H O M A S R O W L E Y.
CONTAINING
A G E N E R A L V I E W
OF THE
W H O L E C O N T R O V E R S Y.

Ego velim genuinum statum Controversiae, ingenuè, ac
terminis minimè ambiguis proponi, & argumenta can-
didè ac solidè in utramque partem expendi, quod ani-
mum, non studio partium abreptum, sed veritatis
sincerè studiosum requirit.

Limborch Epist. ad Locke.

K

BY THOMAS JAMES MATHIAS.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR T. BECKET, PALL-MALL, BOOK-
SELLER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE
OF WALES, AND THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES
THE PRINCES.

M D C C L X X X I I I .

68



P R E F A C E.

HAVING employed much time and attention upon this very curious subject, and finding that the controversy became more and more perplexed, and the real state of it less understood; I endeavoured to arrange my thoughts in as distinct a manner as I could, and to set before myself the sum and substance of all that had been advanced. This I have done with the utmost fidelity in my power; and if by this Essay of mine any person should be enabled to view this question in a clearer light than he did before, I shall think my end completely answered, regardless of the opinion he
may

may form in consequence of it. I only request the favour of my Reader to peruse the following Sections in the order in which I have placed them.

As a List of the different publications which have hitherto appeared on this subject may possibly not be unacceptable to the Reader, I thought it could not be improper to subjoin it here ; but I decline giving any opinion on their respective merits.

The Reader is desired to correct the following *Errata*.

- P. 8. l. 14. for *is*, read *are*.
P. 25. l. 20. for *centures*, read *centuries*.
P. 55. Note. for *LIFE*, read *GENIUS*.
P. 95. l. 15. for *anowwed*, read *avowed*.
P. 105. Note. for *however which*, read *which
however*.

A List of the various Publications upon
the Subject of ROWLEY'S POEMS, *for*
and *against* their *Authenticity*.

EDITIONS OF ROWLEY.

POEMS, supposed to have been written
at Bristol by Thomas Rowley, and
others, in the Fifteenth Century ;
the greatest Part now first pub-
lished from the most authentic
Copies, with an engraved Specimen
of one of the MS. To which are
added, a Preface, an Introductory
Account of the several Pieces, and
a Glossary. Ed. 8vo. 1777.

N. B. This Edition has been reprinted.

DITTO: with a Commentary, in which
the Antiquity of them is considered
and defended, by JEREMIAH
MILLES, D. D. Dean of Exeter.
Ed. 4to. 1782.

THE EIGHTH Section of Mr. Warton's
Second Volume of the History of
English Poetry, with the Notes to it.

REMARKS on the Eighth Section of Mr.
Warton's Second Volume of the
History of English Poetry.

Payne, Mews-Gate.

Two Letters by the Hon. Mr. Horace
Walpole; printed at Strawberry-hill.
—Reprinted, (by his permission) in
the Gentleman's Magazines for
April, May, June, July, 1782.

APPENDIX, containing some Observa-
tions upon the Language of the
Poems attributed to Rowley, tend-
ing to prove, that they were written
not by any ancient Author, but
entirely by Thomas Chatterton.

Payne, Mews-Gate.

N. B. This Appendix is *now* generally
annexed to the 8vo. Edition of Rowley's
Poems.

OBSERVATIONS on the Poems attributed
to Rowley, tending to prove,
that they were really written by

Him and other Ancient Authors.
To which are added, Remarks on
the Appendix of the Editor (of the
8vo. Ed). of Rowley's Poems.

Bathurst, Fleet-street.

OBSERVATIONS upon the Poems of
Thomas Rowley; in which the
Authenticity of those Poems is
ascertained. By JACOB BRYANT,
Esq. *Payne, Mew's Gate, &c.*

CURSORY Observations on the Poems
attributed to Thomas Rowley, a
Priest in the fifteenth Century: with
some Remarks on the Commentaries
on these Poems by the Reverend
Dr. Jeremiah Milles, Dean of Exe-
ter, and Jacob Bryant, Esq;

Nichols and Walter, Charing-cross.

AN ENQUIRY into the Authenticity of
the Poems attributed to Thomas
Rowley, in which the Arguments
of the Dean of Exeter and Mr.
Bryant, are examined. By THO-
MAS WARTON Fellow of Trinity
College, Oxford, and F. S. A.

Dodsfey, Pall-Mall.

STRICTURES upon a Pamphlet entitled,
“ Curfory Observations on the
Poems attributed to Rowley, a
Priest in the Fifteenth Centry.”
With a Postscript on Mr. THOMAS
WARTON’S ENQUIRY into the
same Subject. By E. B. Greene,
Esq. *Stockdale, Piccadilly.*

A VINDICATION of the APPENDIX to
the Poems called Rowley’s : In
Reply to the Answers of the Dean
of Exeter, Jacob Bryant, Esq. and
a third anonymous Writer ; with
some further observations upon those
Poems, and an Examination of the
Evidence which has been produced
in Support of their Authenticity.
By THOMAS TYRWHITT.

Payne, Mew’s Gate.

To which may be added various shorter
Compositions on the Subject (too nume-
rous to specify) inserted in the different
monthly Magazines.

SECTION I.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

Rem universam tribuere in partes; ambigua primum videre, deinde distinguere; postremo habere regulam, qua vera & falsa judicarentur, & quæ quibus positæ essent, quæque non essent, consequentia.

CICER. DE CLAR. ORAT. Sect. 41.

CONTENTS OF SECTION FIRST.

Introduction—Motive for composing the
Essay—Nature of Controversies—Different
Kind of Evidence and Proof on different
Subjects—Substance of the Account given by
Mrs. Chatterton and Mrs. Newton—Mr.
Smith—Mr. Carey—Mr. Clayfield—Mr.
Catcott—Mr. Capell—Mr. Rudhall—Mr.
Thistlethwaite—Thoughts on considering
Subjects of this or the like kind, as relating
to Literature in general.

A N
E S S A Y, &c.

S E C T I O N I.

THE Poems, attributed to Thomas Rowley, have in a peculiar manner, attracted the attention of the learned and the curious. But their several Enquiries have terminated in such opposite opinions, that many have been induced to think, that no point of rest can be found, and that the whole matter must for ever fluctuate in vague conjecture and unsatisfactory investigation.

It is therefore with considerable diffidence, that I engage in what may seem

an unnecessary or an impracticable business.

For whatever the abilities of ingenious men, whatever the sagacity of critics, whatever the erudition of scholars, could devise or produce, has been poured fourth in a large and abundant stream.

The fountains of the great deep of knowledge have been broken up; they have watered the schools of Academics, and the habitations of men of more general conversation with the world. It is not with a thought that I can add many things absolutely new, to surprise or enchain the attention, that I deliver my sentiments on this subject: I rather wish to collect the scattered doctrines, to represent their united virtue, and to place them, according to my ability, in
a man-

a manner best adapted to display their efficacy.

It is with no small degree of surprise mixed with concern, that I contemplate men of great abilities and learning forming conclusions diametrically opposite from the same principles. The nature of the human mind confounds me every step I take: so true is the observation of the elegant fabulist,

Sua cuique est animi cogitatio,
Colorque proprius.

For whoever considers the names of those who have viewed the arguments arising from the *internal evidence* which these poems contain, will have reason to abate somewhat of confident assertion and peremptory decision.

But when the merits of the cause are weighed with impartiality; when argument is opposed to argument, and au-

thority to authority; I cannot but be of opinion, that the thinking part of such gentlemen as are interested in the fate of this controversy, must inevitably allow, that if *external* evidence can be obtained, that, and that alone, can seem capable of deciding the dispute. This, at least, can hardly be perverted. For since all mere internal arguments are derived from the reason and speculation of some inquisitive minds, they will undoubtedly be controverted and examined by the reason and ingenuity of others who have equal pretensions to be heard; it is in vain therefore to expect universal acquiescence in matters of this nature. As to the Poems, they are before us: of their existence there is no doubt. How they were brought to light is a matter of fact; and a matter of fact must be established by legitimate and competent testimony. Here we have no recourse to Saxon antiquity, or to the erudi-

erudition of other times : *So it is*, is the sum of all that can be advanced.

If the validity of the witnesses can be questioned, or their intentions proved to be dishonest ; if they had any peculiar purpose or interest to serve, which prevented them from giving plain answers to plain questions ; if all or any of these disqualifications are found to take place in regard to the matter before us, let whatever they have advanced be esteemed as null and void. But as all of them, as far as I have heard, are persons of integrity, and some of abilities ; and as the principal parts of their evidence were delivered before the parties on either side had risen to a considerable height, and when it was even dubious whether the substance of it would ever be laid before the public ; I see no reason why their evidence should not be admitted without hesitation.

As

As we stand oftener in need of being reminded than of being informed, I beg leave to recall a few common thoughts to the reader's attention previous to the consideration of the subject at large. I am by no means fond of controversy, and have often lamented the disagreeable effects of it, which have extended much farther than the parties ever designed or conceived. But then we should also remember, that there are topics of universal interest, in which the safety and well being of mankind is concerned. These must and ought to be discussed with that zealous ardour which subjects like these demand.

But the animosity and heat of any contest is not always in proportion to its magnitude or importance. If indeed the spirit of Milton rose to overwhelm, with an acrimonious resistless torrent of eloquence and argument, the feeble defender of Charles; we have also
seen

seen the asperity and the vehemence of a Scaliger or a Bentley, when the rectifying of a comma or the substitution of a particle was the important principle of the debate.

In the proposed question, whether the Poems of Rowley are authentic or not, I cannot conceive that the fate of nations is involved, or the honour of any individual vitally touched. The parties really concerned are now out of the reach of human applause or censure. They have left behind them their works, as toys with which mortals may rationally amuse themselves, and consider according to their respective capacities. Yet in this and in all other subjects, I look upon Truth as one uncompounded substance, the contemplation of which is the highest gratification the human mind can enjoy.

But

But no rational enquirer expects the same kind of evidence in every subject. The mathematician glories that incontrovertible science is his pursuit, and stands on a basis which cannot be shaken. The natural Philosopher is convinced of the certainty of the conclusions he makes, when drawn from his own experiments, yet scruples not to admit the testimony of credible men for the truth of many others, which it is impossible or inconvenient for him to repeat himself, and on which he builds other equally important conclusions. We cannot stir a single step in any of the ways of knowledge without relying on our fellow creatures for information. It is through their medium that we receive the greatest and most interesting truths. So just is the observation of a great writer; “ There is no science
 “ taught without original belief; there
 “ are no letters learnt without faith;
 “ there is no justice executed, no com-
 “ merce

"merce maintained, no business pro-
 "cuted without this. All secular af-
 "fairs are transacted, all great achieve-
 "ments are attempted, all hopes, de-
 "sires, and inclinations are preserved
 "by this human faith *grounded on the*
 "*testimony of man.*"

Knowledge indeed admits of various
 degrees, from the full blaze of certainty
 to the dimmest twilight of probability.
 An understanding well-cultivated and
 disposed to the reception of truth, gives
 to every argument its proper weight in
 the balance. Some propositions it can-
 not admit without doing violence to the
 principles of reasoning, and the nature
 of evidence; to others it yields, though
 with some reluctance, should they be
 found to counteract a favourite precon-
 ceived opinion. But if naked truth be
 the object, either in a trivial or an im-
 portant affair, an ingenuous mind will
 give that degree of attention to it which

is necessary for the discovery. I mention this, as the present Question is of little moment to the world at large; but if it deserves any investigation at all, it deserves such an one, as may enable an enquirer to form his own judgment upon it, to feature forth distinctly his own conceptions, and institute a just comparison of such evidence, as the nature of the subject will permit, wherever it may tend.

As these Poems came to light by means of THOMAS CHATTERTON, either as author or copier, (for I deem it *impossible* to argue on any other ground) the best method which can be pursued, is, first, to give the history of this young man, *so far as relates to the poems*, without descending to foreign minutiae. This I am enabled to collect from the various accounts given by those who were personally acquainted with him, or connected by the ties of blood. This will
com-

comprehend the whole of the *External Evidence*. It is my design in the Second Part, to comprize all the *principal* arguments of *Internal Evidence* which have been urged by the advocates of either opinion. Lastly, from a combination of the circumstances, I mean to propose such a conclusion as shall seem to me most accordant to the principles of just reasoning, and the nature of evidence.

Circumstances, however trifling, receive a kind of dignity foreign to themselves, when united with a subject about which public curiosity is excited. I hope therefore, to be excused the mentioning some circumstances otherwise unworthy of being recorded. This part of my essay is not susceptible of ornament; simple narration, freed from perplexity, is all that we can in justice require.

THOMAS

THOMAS CHATTERTON was born on the 20th of November, 1752, in the City of Bristol. At the age of five years he was put to a little school ; but his faculties being remarkably dull, his master could not make him comprehend the letters of the alphabet, and advised his mother to remove him, which she accordingly did. On his return home, his mother endeavoured to instruct him herself, and her labours were at last attended with success. She taught him his letters from an old French manuscript on vellum, the subject of which was music ; and afterwards, when he had made some progress, he read to her in an ancient Testament in Gothic Characters. These early circumstances gave him a taste for antiquity.

About the age of eight years, Chatterton was sent to Coulston's charity school, in which nothing whatsoever was taught but reading English, writing, and
accompts.

accompts. He continued here between six and seven years. It is to be observed, that he was in school under the immediate inspection of the Master from seven o'clock till twelve in the morning, and from one till five in the evening, in summer time; and in winter from eight till twelve, and again from one o'clock till four. He was in bed all the year round at eight o'clock in the evening. The rules of the school never permitted him to be absent but on Saturdays and Saints-days; and then only from between one and two o'clock 'till between seven and eight in the evening. On the very day he left Coulston's school he was articulated to Mr. Lambert, an attorney. He was fourteen years of age the 20th of November, and bound apprentice the 1st of July following.

As Mr. Lambert's business was not very extensive, Chatterton was seldom employed above two hours in the day
with

with official concerns. He rose early in the morning, and went late to rest at night; but was never absent from Mr. Lambert's house later than ten o'clock, but once, during the whole time of his residence there. He used to pay a visit to his mother and sister generally from eight to nine every evening. About the time of his being bound to Mr. Lambert, he discovered accidentally some of the manuscripts in question, with which his father had covered twenty bibles, forty copy-books, and Clark's History of the Bible, in quarto. He questioned his mother about them, and she told him from whence they originally came, and where he would find the remainder, viz. in a large deal box belonging to his father. Upon this information he immediately went to the box which his mother had pointed out, and removed the manuscripts from thence into a square oak one of a smaller size. He said he had discovered a treasure, and was perpetually

petually talking about Rowley. From time to time he used to fill his pockets with these manuscripts which he carried to the office. He then went himself to the room over the north porch of Redclift Church where he found some few more. In the evenings he used very often to read the poems, which he said were the compositions of Rowley, aloud to his mother and sister; and after them, it was his custom to entertain them with *his own*, which were chiefly of a satirical nature. These latter made them rather uneasy, as they were apprehensive that such writings would be productive of disagreeable consequences to himself. From that time he constantly kept to Rowley.

His sister remembers to have seen the original parchment of a poem on our Lady's Church, and, as she thinks, of the Battle of Hastings also in the same manner. His sister not understanding

the old terms, as he read them, he was frequently very angry with her; particularly when he was reading the *Battle of Hastings*. She remembers hearing her brother talk very frequently of the names of Turgot and John Stow, besides that of Rowley. He never transcribed any poem at his mother's house, but all at Mr. Lambert's office. His sister remembers having once called upon him at Mr. Lambert's, and finding him with an old parchment crumpled at the edges and green with age.

As to books, Chatterton's father had about one hundred and fifty, which were sold at his death to a Mr. Long. As to every book of every kind to which it was possible for him, in his situation, to have had recourse, they must be searched for, either at Green's and Shircliff's circulating libraries, or at Messrs. Barret's, Catcott, and Clayfield. This is the substance of the genuine
volun-

voluntary information which was received from Mrs. CHATTERTON his mother, and Mrs. NEWTON his sister.

Chatterton had a few particular friends to whom he was peculiarly attached and unfolded the secrets of his heart. Among these was a Mr. SMITH. Mr. Smith is of opinion, that Chatterton knew nothing of these manuscripts till he went to Mr. Lambert's, which was when between fourteen and fifteen years of age. He used to read to Mr. Smith, sometimes parts, and sometimes whole treatises from pieces of ancient manuscripts which were upon vellum. He remembers to have seen above a dozen of them. Some of them were as broad as the bottom of a large-sized chair, and had upon them the heads of popes or kings. He has seen Chatterton frequently transcribing them at Lambert's, and remembers that he used to read to him what he had just transcribed. Mr.

Smith confesses that he had no taste for these old compositions, and that Chatterton has often told him that he knew nothing of them till he went to Mr. Lambert's. That he had them from an old box belonging to his father, who procured them from a place in Redclift Church. Chatterton moreover told him, that the first discovery he made of their value, was occasioned by his observing his mother's thread-papers which were of old parchment. The uncommon hand-writing and strange words struck him much, and upon his questioning his mother, she informed him where he might find the remainder of them, in the box mentioned above.

Mr. Smith says, he recollects well, that Chatterton would often walk with him in Redclift Meadows, and converse with him on these ancient manuscripts. Sometimes his heart would seem to burn within him; and then pointing to the
Church

Church (in viewing which he always took a particular delight) he would, with a glow of enthusiasm on his countenance, tell him a variety of curious particulars relating to it. Look there, would he say, that steeple was once burnt down by lightning ! This was the place where they formerly used to act Plays. While he was speaking this, he held a parchment in his hand; but whether he read from it or not, Mr. Smith does not remember. Chatterton always mentioned these manuscripts as being all ancient ones; whether all as Rowley's, Mr. Smith cannot say, though he remembers no other poet's name but his. Chatterton never at any time talked of them as his own compositions; nor ever gave the least hint of such an idea. Mr. Smith means all such poems as he gave to Mr. Catcott and Mr Barret, as ancient ones. Whatever he presented to Mr. Smith or any other friend as his own, or whatever he pub-

published in magazines, &c. with his own signature, were undoubtedly such; Mr. Smith observed that he needed not to borrow from any man. His genius he said, was universal, and nothing but inspiration could fathom all the young man knew. Mr. Smith adds, he never mentioned any design to him of publishing these ancient manuscripts, nor does he remember that Chatterton ever found any more of them in the room over the north porch of Redcliff Church.

As to Chatterton's learning, Mr. Smith says, he is certain that the young man had no knowledge whatever of Greek and Latin. That he had once a design of teaching himself the Latin tongue; but that he (Mr. Smith) dissuaded him from the attempt, and recommended the French, as it might prove of more service to him hereafter. Mr. Smith observed, that he wished he had known the value of these manuscripts as he might

might have had them, had he expressed the least desire. It was through him he said, that Mr. Barret and Mr. Catcott became possessed of what they now have, and concluded with repeating, that he might have had any of them for a word's asking: but at that time he had no taste for such compositions.

Chatterton had another friend who was called his *second self*, Mr. CAREY. He has written a letter to Mr. Catcott on this subject. The substance of it is; that he very frequently heard Chatterton mention that Rowley's writings *and other* manuscripts were in his possession soon after he left Coulston's school, and went to Mr. Lambert's. That Chatterton had given some of them to Mr. Catcott and Mr. Barret; that he does not recollect Chatterton had ever *shewn* them to him (Mr. Carey) as he had no taste whatsoever for old poetry; but that Chatterton had mentioned these manuscripts

scripts to him at an age when he was utterly incapable of having written them, and wonders how any man can be induced to believe it. Mr. Carey says, he was acquainted with Chatterton from his infancy, and was witness to the progress of his genius; and is of opinion, that his powers were by no means equal to the production of Rowley's poems, particularly at the age when he brought them to light; and concludes with observing, that he himself is convinced of their authenticity.

It has been supposed that Mr. CLAYFIELD of Bristol furnished Chatterton with books. Mr. Clayfield, upon being asked, said he had indeed a small library; but does not recollect that he ever lent Chatterton above two books, which were, Martin's philological grammar, and that volume of Martin's philosophy to which a copy of verses is prefixed. Mr. Clayfield is of opinion that Chatterton

ton was of too volatile a turn to read much. He recollects Chatterton's talking to him of the ancient poems in question, though not often; but that he used to read to him passages from Milton and Thompson, though he was principally fond of his own poems, which turned chiefly on satirical subjects, for which species of writing he had a peculiar talent. Mr. Clayfield said, that from the knowledge he had of the young man, he believed the poems of Rowley, to be no more the compositions of Chatterton than his own.

Mr. CATCOTT's account, as given in the preface to the octavo edition of Rowley, is as follows. " The first discovery of certain manuscripts having
 " been deposited in Redcliff Church,
 " above three centuries ago, was made
 " in the year 1768, at the time of
 " opening the new bridge at Bristol;
 " and was owing to a publication in
 Farley's

“ Farley’s weekly Journal, 1st October
 “ 1768, containing, *an account of the*
 “ *ceremonies used at opening the Bridge,*
 “ taken, as was said, from a very anci-
 “ ent manuscript. This excited the
 “ curiosity of some persons to inquire
 “ after the original. The Printer, Mr.
 “ Farley, could give no account of it,
 “ or of the person who brought the
 “ copy; but after much inquiry it was
 “ discovered to have been brought by a
 “ youth of between fifteen and sixteen
 “ years of age whose name was Thomas
 “ Chatterton, and whose family had been
 “ sextons of Redcliff Church for near one
 “ hundred and fifty years. His father,
 “ who was now dead, had also been master
 “ of the Free-school in Pile-street. The
 “ young man was at first very unwilling
 “ to discover from whence he had the
 “ original; but after many promises
 “ made to him, he was at last prevailed
 “ on to acknowledge that he had recei-
 “ ved this, *together with many other*
 “ manu-

“ *manuscripts*, from his father, who had
 “ found them in a large chest in an upper
 “ room over the chapel on the north
 “ side of Redclift Church.”

Soon after this, Chatterton was introduced to Mr. Catcott, and *then* gave him the Bristowe Tragedy, and Rowley's Epitaph on Canynge's grandfather. In two or three days after, he brought also to Mr. Catcott the Yellow Roll, and the song to Ælla in the original manuscript, which Mr. Catcott immediately carried to Mr. Barret, and introduced the boy to him. Mr. Barret was at that time writing the history of Bristol. The song to Ælla was written like prose without any breaks or divisions into verses. Mr. Catcott remembers that Chatterton had at that time the mark of the school-tonsure on his head, and was turned of fifteen years of age. He also recollects that Chatterton then mentioned the names of most of the
 poems

poems which have since appeared. In 1769 he brought to Mr Catcott the tragical enterlude of *Ælla* in his own hand-writing in folio, with the epistle, letter and introduction ; upon which Mr. Catcott wrote, " Chatterton's Transcript 1769." Mr. Catcott is certain, that the young man understood neither Greek nor Latin; and yet Mr. Catcott could produce sentences in both these languages from manuscripts given him by Chatterton. This is a short abstract of this gentleman's account, to whose zeal and attention the public is principally indebted for this collection of poems.

In the introductory account to the poems of Rowley, octavo edition, the editor informs us that sometime after Chatterton had brought the first part of the *Battle of Hastings* to Mr. Barret, that gentleman prest him to produce any part of this poem in the original hand-writing, and that at last he said, that he
wrote

wrote this poem himself for a friend ; but that he had another, the copy of an original by Rowley, and being then desired to produce that other poem, he, after a considerable interval of time, brought to Mr. Barret the poem marked No. 2. as far as v. 520 inclusive, with the following title ; “ *Battle of Hastings by Turgotus, translated by Rowly for W. Canynge Esq.*” The lines from v. 521 inclusive, were brought sometime after in consequence of Mr. Barret’s repeated solicitations for the conclusion of the poem.

I may add, that Chatterton once borrowed Skinner’s Etymologicum of Mr. Barret, but returned it in a few days, because most of the interpretations were in Latin, which he did not understand. He did the same by a small Saxon dictionary which had in like manner been lent to him; and which he returned on the same account.

Mr.

Mr. CAPEL, a Jeweller at Bristol, was acquainted with Chatterton, and has often called in at Mr. Lambert's office when he was writing, and at times has seen him copying old manuscripts. As he never conceived, that they would prove hereafter of so great a value, he had no particular inducement to make any curious enquiry about them; nor will he take upon him to determine whether they were of parchment, or not. He remembers very well, that they lay in heaps and in great confusion, and appeared to be rumbled and stained. Near them were the papers upon which Chatterton had been transcribing; he says that Chatterton always spoke of these manuscripts as ancient writings, and told him *that he was then studying to understand the old language in which they were written.*

In Mr. T. Warton's enquiry into the authenticity of Rowley's poems, I find the following account of a transaction between Mr. Rudhall and Chatterton,
stated

stated in a letter from Mr. H. Crofts to Mr. Steevens. I have copied it verbatim; the left hand column containing Dr. Milles's words, and the right hand one Mr. Croft's remarks upon them.

" A *singular* circumstance relating to the history of this ceremony ("of passing the old bridge)" *has been communicated to the public within these two last years*; and candour requires that it should not pass unnoticed here, especially as the character of the relator leaves no room for suspicion. The objectors to the authenticity of these poems may possibly

" The circumstance is singular and I have always thought so; but it has never yet, I believe, been communicated to the public; though I certainly meant it should some time or other.

tri-

It

triumph in the discovery of a fact, which contains, in their opinion, a decisive proof that Chatterton was the author of this paper, and (as they would infer) of all the poetry which he produced under Rowley's name; but *when the circumstances are attentively examined*, the reader will probably find that even this fact tends rather to establish, than to invalidate, the authenticity of the poems.

Mr. John Rudhall,
a native and inhabitant

It is not clear to me, that the advocates for Chatterton have occasion to be apprehensive, *if the circumstances should be attentively examined* even according to the Dean's own shewing. But mine is somewhat different.

tant of Bristol, and formerly apprentice to Mr. Francis Gresly, an apothecary in that city, was well acquainted with Chatterton, whilst he was apprentice to Mr. Lambert.

During that time, Chatterton frequently called upon him at his master's house, and, *soon after he had printed this account of the Bridge in the Bristol paper, told Mr. Ruddall, that he was the author of it; but it occurring to him afterwards, that he might be called upon to produce the original,*

My visit to Bristol of a few days, in order to collect information concerning Chatterton, was on the 23d July, 1778. At that time I gave something to the mother and sister for their voluntary communications to me. After I published LOVE AND MADNESS, I laid a larger plan for their benefit, which I hope still to see carried into execution; and I destined something more to the family

nal, he brought to him one day a piece of parchment, about the size of a half sheet of fool's cap paper; Mr. Ruddall does not think that any thing was written on it when produced by Chatterton, but he saw him write several words, if not lines, in a character which Mr. Ruddall did not understand, which he says was totally unlike English, and, as he apprehended, was meant by Chatterton to imitate or represent the original from which this account was printed. He cannot determine precisely how

ly of him whose genius, I so much respected, though I well knew his family deemed me their enemy, for endeavouring to prove him guilty of Forgery. Prevented from going to Bath, and consequently from giving what I had set apart for this purpose, with my own hands, I gladly seized the liberty allowed me by a friend of Mr. Ruddall to beg this favour of him. On the 22d of March, 1781, I

how much Chatterton wrote in this manner, but says, that the time he spent in that visit did not exceed three quarters of an hour; the size of the parchment however, (even supposing it to be filled with writing) will in some measure ascertain the quantity which it contained.

I wrote to Mr. Rudhall, to whom I was then a perfect stranger, making use of his friends name, and enclosing a draught to him or his order for ten pounds, requesting he would give the money to Chatterton's mother and sister. On the 30th of the same month Mr. Rudhall called upon me in Lincoln's-inn; appeared, as I imagined, to lean to the side of this question which I have ever thought

thought to be the right: and told me of his own accord, what certainly agrees no more with the Dean's account, than what I have already related agrees with the Dean's saying, that Mr. Ruddall told this, in 1779, on the prospect of procuring a gratuity of ten pounds for Chatterton's mother, from a gentleman who came to Bristol in order to collect information concerning the son's history.

He

He says also, that *when Chatterton had written on the parchment, he held it over the candle, to give it the appearance of antiquity, which changed the colour of the ink, and made the parchment appear black and a little contracted: he never saw him make any similar attempt, nor was the parchment produced afterwards by Chatterton to him, or (as far as he knows) to any other person. From a perfect knowledge of Chatterton's abilities, he thinks him to have been incapable of writing the Battle* of

If my memory not only fails me now, but failed me the same day, and has failed me ever since, Mr. Rudall will correct me. To him I appeal, and by him I must submit to be corrected. But on the 30th of March 1781, he told me, AS I THINK, that he assisted Chatterton in disguising SEVERAL pieces of parchment with the appearances of age, just before "the Account of passing the Bridge" appeared

of Hastings, or any of those poems produced by him under the name of Rowley, nor does he remember that Chatterton ever mentioned Rowley's poems to him, either as original or the contrary ;
but sometimes (though very rarely) intimated that he was possessed of some valuable literary productions. Mr. Rud-
dall had promised Chatterton not to reveal this secret, and he scrupulously kept his word till the year 1779 ; but,
 ON THE PROSPECT
 OF PROCURING A

in Farley's Journal; that after they had made several experiments, Chatterton said, "this will do," now I will black
 THE parchment :
that whether he told him at the time what
 THE parchment was
he could not remember ; that he believed he did not see
 Chatterton black THE
parchment, but that Chatterton told him, after the "Account of passing the Bridge" had appeared in the News - paper, that THE parchment which he had black-
 ed and disguised, af-
 ter

GRATUITY OF TEN
POUNDS FOR CHAT-
TERTON'S MOTHER
FROM A GENTLE-
MAN WHO CAME TO
BRISTOL IN ORDER
TO COLLECT INFOR-
MATION CONCERN-
ING HER SON'S HIS-
TORY, he thought
so material a benefit
to the family would
fully justify him for
divulging a secret
by which no person
now living could be
a sufferer.*

*ter their experi-
ments, was what
he had sent to the
printer containing
the Account.**

* N O T E.

Having laid this account before the Rea-
der *verbatim* as I find it in Mr. WARTON'S
ENQUIRY, I think it my duty to mention,
as I wish to conceal nothing, that in re-
gard to what Mr. Croft has stated *from*
memory,

The Reverend Dr. Milles, in his edition of Rowley's Poems, p. 454. has presented

N O T E.

memory, I have been informed, and upon the most unquestionable authority, that there is a letter of Mr. Ruddall's extant on this very subject, written to a friend of his. In this he perseveres in his first assertion, that he *never* saw Chatterton attempt this mode of giving what he conceived to be the appearance of antiquity *to more than one piece of parchment*. However, admitting the utmost that has been advanced, I beg leave to add a few remarks on the occasion, as some have thought this transaction of great consequence.

If Mr. Ruddall actually saw Chatterton write on parchment and hold it over a candle, to give it the appearance of antiquity; I do not see who can or ought to pretend to dispute a plain fact. But granting Mr. R. actually saw him take even *several pieces of parchment*, and give them what he conceived to be the appearance of antiquity; I would ask, What were the subjects of these

sented us with a letter from Mr. THISTLE-
THWAITE,

N O T E.

these parchments? Were they of poetry, or in prose? Did they bear any resemblance to those actually in Mr. Barret's hands? Were they similar to any of real antiquity? Did they pass for ancient ones with any person? or Were they ever seen by any one whatsoever, but Mr. Ruddall? Nothing is specified but "the Account of the ceremonies at opening the Bridge," and that too after it had been published in the Bristol Journal; and Mr. Ruddall confesses he knew nothing of the subjects of the parchments, even allowing there to have been SEVERAL pieces of parchment, according to Mr. Croft's account from memory. The very appearances produced by Chatterton's holding the parchment over the candle, namely, *the contraction of the parchment*, and the *change of the colour of the ink*, are not judged to be discriminating marks of antiquity by those who are conversant in those subjects: and finally, I would ask, *Is it possible* to produce the genuine appearance of antiquity in any piece of parch-

THWAITE, which contains many curious
and

N O T E.

parchment, by holding it over a candle in
any manner whatsoever.

A complete list of the original parchments,
which were given to Mr. Barret by Chatter-
ton, and which he has now in his hands,
was communicated by that gentleman to Dr.
Milles, and is as follows :

Milles's Rowley, page 438.

The Song to Ella, with the challenge to
Lydgate and the Answer. This poem was
sent by Mr. Barret to a friend, and is un-
fortunately lost.

Canynge's Feast, a Poem,

The first thirty-six lines of the Storie of
William Canynge.

The following are Historical Prose Compositions.

1. The Yellow Roll, containing an account
of the origin of coinage in England,
and

and interesting particulars. The substance

N O T E.

and of the curiosities in Canynge's cabinet. This also was lent with the song to Ella, by Mr. Barret to a friend, and is lost.

2. The purple Roll, thirteen inches by ten, containing an Account of particular Coins, and the second and third Sections of Turgotus's History of Bristol. N. B. The first Section above quoted is also extant in Chatterton's own hand, but the original does not appear.
3. Vita Burtoni, a parchment roll, about eight inches long, and four broad, very closely written; containing an account of Sir Simon de Burton, and his rebuilding Redclift church.
4. Knights Templars Church; a History of its foundation, &c.
5. St. Mary's Church of the Port; a History of it from its foundation, ending with the verses on Robert Canynge.
6. Roll of Bartholomew's Priory, with a List of the Priors.

7. An

stance of it, as far as I conceive, amounts to this :

Mr.

N O T E.

7. An Account of the Chapel and House of Calendars; a drawing of the chapel, and underneath an explanation of it.
8. Ella's Chapple. No drawing, except of the Kist of Ella, but there is an account of its foundation.
9. St. Mary Magdalen's Chapel. A drawing only.
10. Grey Friars Church. A drawing only.
11. Drawing of three monumental Inscriptions.
12. Ancient Monument and Rudhall: mere delineations.
13. Lesser and Greater St. John's: only a rude delineation.
14. Several Drawings of the Castle of Bristol
15. Strong Hold of the Castle: a drawing, and account of its foundation, by Robert Earl of Gloucester, and Site thereof.
16. Old Wall of Bristol; mere drawings.
17. Carne of Robert Curthoses Mynde in Castle steed: a drawing or figure, with the words *Carne*, &c. underneath.

Mr. THISTLETHWAITE informs us, that by means of his intimacy with a Mr. THOMAS PHILIPS, sometime an assistant master in Coulston's Charity-school in Bristol, he formed a connection with Chatterton then on the foundation there, about the end of the year 1763. Mr. Thistlethwaite thinks that Chatterton did not pen a single couplet during the first three years of his acquaintance with him, nor had he at that time formed any exalted idea of the boy's abilities.

In the summer of the year 1764 Chatterton informed Mr. Thistlethwaite, that he was in possession of certain old manuscripts which had been found deposited in a chest in Redcliff Church, and that he had lent one or two of them to Mr. Philips before-mentioned. Mr. Philips, (who was of a poetical turn himself) a few days after shewed one of them on parchment or vellum to Mr. Thistlethwaite, who is confident that it was the poem entituled *Elenoure and Juge*,
after-

afterwards published in the Town and Country Magazine for 1769. Mr. Thistlethwaite says, the parchment or vellum appeared to have been closely pared round the margin, for what purpose, or by what accident, he knows not; but the words were entire and unmutilated. As the writing was yellow and pale, as Mr. Thistlethwaite conceives, by age, Mr. Philips had with his pen traced and gone over several of the lines, which, as well as Mr. Thistlethwaite's recollection serves, were written in the manner of prose, without any regard to punctuation. Yet nevertheless, they could not make out the full meaning and scope of the whole, from their ignorance of the characters, manners, language and orthography of the age in which the lines were written.

In the course of the year 1768, in divers visits that Mr. Thistlethwaite made to Chatterton, (while he was at Mr. Lam-

Lambert's) he found him employed in copying Rowley, from what he then considered, and does still consider, as undoubted originals. He is of opinion, that Chatterton received assistance in explaining the old terms, from the glossary to Chaucer; and he thinks he once saw him with Skinner's Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae. Mr. Thistlethwaite perfectly remembers to have read several stanzas copied from the *Deathe of Sir Charles Barwin*, the original of which then lay before him; but, that he thinks the language, as he then saw it, was much more obsolete than in the present editions of that beautiful poem.

Mr. Thistlethwaite observes, that when Chatterton was asked for the originals of those pieces, (since published in Chatterton's Miscellanies, such as the imitations of Ossian, &c.) he hesitated not to confess, that they were merely
the

the offspring and invention of his own fancy. But whenever he was questioned as to the authenticity of the poems attributed to Rowley, his declaration was invariably and uniformly in support of their antiquity and the reputation of their author Rowley.

Mr. Thistlethwaite thinks, that had Chatterton been the author of the poems attributed to Rowley, so far from secreting such a circumstance, he would have made it his first and his greatest pride: as all who were acquainted with him will readily admit, that vanity and an inordinate thirst after praise eminently distinguished his character. Mr. Thistlethwaite is of opinion, that the immorality of Chatterton's life has been aggravated far beyond the truth: but whatever be the state of the case in this point, the zeal of Mr. Thistlethwaite's regard for the memory of his friend, deserves our approbation or our excuse.

For

For my own part, I am inclined to fear that the end of this unfortunate, ingenious and much-lamented youth, was of that dreadful kind, to which the scenes of unnatural Atheism and immature debauchery have an almost necessary tendency. His spirit was impatient of controul, conscious of undeserved and unaccountable neglect; till at last, pride, melancholy and scepticism wrought upon his powers, and having done their perfect work, hurried him into the grave, without a fear and without a hope.

THIS is the State of such Evidence as has been procured, relative to Rowley's Poems, which I have endeavoured to place in a clear point of view. I have purposely avoided entering into a discussion of the minutiae of Chatterton's life, his adventuring turn among booksellers and political pamphlet-writers, with other trifles, which I deem either foreign to the investigation, or serving only to embarrass

E

and

and bewilder our thoughts, when directed to the particular object.

I think what has been advanced indisputably proves the existence of many of the parchments in question, and of the contents of some of them. Had they consisted of plain prose narrations, or merely of such events as had not hitherto come to light; had they treated of anecdotes, armorial bearings, ancient records or similar points of antiquity, I much doubt whether any question would have been raised of their authenticity. But what a different object is presented to our contemplation! we behold a poetical fabric, perfect in all its parts, rising from an abyss of darkness and obscurity, whose foundation is solid, and whose superstructure is elegant. It seems as if the Spirit of Poetry had chosen it for his secret residence.

Men,

Men, like Mr. de Voltaire, may indeed smile at contending Commentators, and may talk with some degree of pleasantry of what that lively writer calls, *The Spirit of Charity between two Chinese Interpreters* *.

But to reason is one thing, and to joke is another. Let each possess its

* The passage I allude to is the following, taken from the exordium of a little treatise which Voltaire, for reasons best known to himself, chose to entitle, *La Defence de mon Oncle*; the sentence contains a just and good-humoured satire on the rage of system when pursued without judgement, but falls impotent from the shield opposed to it by real learning. “ Quand Monsieur Guignes fit
 “ descendre les Chinois des Egyptiens,
 “ quand il prétendit que l’Empereur de la
 “ la Chine Xu étoit visiblement le Roi d’E-
 “ gypte Ménes, en changeant *nes* en *u*, & *mé*
 “ en *y* (quoique Ménes ne soit pas un nom
 “ Egyptien mais Grec) mon Oncle alors

proper department, and truth has at all times defied the power of ridicule. The difficulties attending this question are, doubtless, very great: nor can they even be understood in their full extent, without much patient examination. Yet when we consider the nature and complexion of our understandings, and how wonderfully they vary, that what is proof with one, appears only in the light of conjecture with another; we should not be too hasty in drawing our conclusions. Neither names, nor party, nor authority, nor prejudice, nor conjecture, should influence such minds as deem the enquiry interesting. In every concern, an honest mind is bound thus to act: to propose his doubts for doubts, and his opinions for opinions.

“ se permit une petite raillerie innocente,
 “ laquelle d'ailleurs ne devait point affaiblir
 “ l'esprit de charité entre deux Interpretes Chinois.
 “ Car au fond mon Oncle estimait fort Mon-
 “ sieur Guignes.” *Si sic omnia.*

If

If any person considers this question as a matter of mere amusement, and not of any serious importance, he says no more of it than may, with equal justice, be affirmed of *every other* mere literary subject. Yet even in this point of view it deserves no common regard. It is a national subject, and administers many an interesting topic to our discussion in the antiquities of our own language, manners and customs. I would further suggest, as a general apology; that we and all of our fellow-creatures stand in such frequent need of relaxation from more serious concerns, that he who can increase the stock of harmless pleasure, and furnish out an intellectual feast, from the depths of literature, the recesses of harmony, the power of the pencil, or the creation of poetry, is a member of society more intrinsically useful and respectable, than we may at first imagine.

Employment and exercise are necessary for every Being. There is an energy, an active principle in the human mind, which must operate visibly or in secret, and have its peculiar object. Unfortunately for us, the nature of that object too often becomes indifferent when once the passions are suffered to interfere. It is not then the subject, but the affections; not the end proposed, but the pleasure of contention. Any thing will serve; the struggles for forms of government, the subtleties of Theology or Metaphysics, the *Homo-ousion* and the *Homoi-ousion*, the Sleep of the Soul, Space and Time, the Epistles of Phalaris or the Poems of Rowley, may be, and are fully sufficient to display the internal nature of man, and feelingly persuade him what he is.

Perhaps indeed every subject, which requires a train of argument, in some measure promotes the end of our being; and by informing the understanding, has

a tendency to correct the heart. If we impartially consider that all the accumulated volumes of sound reasoning and just criticism never yet formed, possibly never assisted, a POET; that all the institutions of eloquence never yet conferred the gift of speech, or taught an ORATOR to wield at will the passions of man; we may be inclined to question what speculations can prove of any real utility. Yet no one who discourses with propriety on the drama or the epic or similar * points, is deemed wholly an useless writer: it is always of some importance to reduce under the rules of legitimate reasoning those subjects which seem abandoned to the caprice of taste. Why then should these enquiries into the Poems attributed to

* It is impossible for a lover of Poetry, in its genuine sense and character, to forget THE ESSAY ON THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF POPE," which must always be read with singular entertainment and instruction.

Rowley be regarded as frivolous, when we consider the various topics they may necessarily introduce, or the pleasing speculations into which they may lead an inquisitive mind?

SECTION II.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

Disputantium fervor & partium studium rebus per se claris nubem & caliginem obducunt, dum undique conquisitis laqueis alter alterum irretire & absurdis involvere conatur. Si autem tu meæ, vel ego tuæ opinioni assentior, perinde est Veritatem quærentibus, dummodo illius potior habeatur sententia, quæ verior, & in eâ consentiamus.

Locke Epist. ad Limborch.

C O N T E N T S

O F

SECTION THE SECOND.

Diversity of Judgment in all matters of Taste, in particular of Poetry; and in a peculiar manner of such Poetry, as that now in dispute.—Arguments AGAINST *the Authenticity* of the Poems attributed to Rowley, under the following Heads. 1. Style, Composition and Sentiment. 2. Metre. 3. Ancient Language. 4. Historical Allusions and the Learning contained in the Poems. 5. Comparison of Chatterton's own Poems with those attributed to Rowley.—Arguments FOR *their Authenticity* under the same Heads.

ESSAY, &c.

SECTION II.

IN almost every Controversy, which is submitted either to judicial decision, or to the arbitration of taste, men are disposed to view the arguments offered in support of a particular opinion in different lights, whence necessarily arises a diversity of judgment. But the human mind is too often accustomed, either from impatience of delay, or from want of proper skill, or more commonly from inattention and idleness, to give a hasty assent or dissent to subjects and propositions, even where clear demonstrative proofs and certain knowledge may, if sought after with diligence, be obtained.

As

As to Literature, the various modes of our pursuits, and the particular cast which our minds may have received from accidental circumstances, render it an absurdity to expect an uniformity of opinion.

In Poetry this is peculiarly remarkable: but if we would for a moment consider what criterion each man sets up for himself, the wonder would cease. If the composition is such, as interests the passions and applies to the feelings of the heart, the general voice of mankind will acknowledge its excellence. But if it proposes to elevate the fancy by the power of fiction and the sublimity of imagery, it is vain for an author to hope for approbation but from the intelligent.

I mention Poetry, as among all the arts and inventions of men, which ennoble or embellish life, there is no one which, under some of its diversified forms,

forms, has more strongly attracted the notice of every rank and understanding. Whatever is uncommon in this art, naturally excites curiosity, and calls forth the erudition and sagacity of critics. In the learned languages much time has been expended and abilities exercised in settling the text of the ancient bards, and displaying their beauties and defects. But, now since *almost all* that human abilities can perform has been exhausted in restoring these valuable remains of genuine composition to their original perfection and purity, the learned of our own nation have with great propriety turned their industry to the illustration of those authors,* whose names have made the name of England famous, wherever the influence of literature is felt throughout the world. It is now no longer a satire on us that we have neglected our national authors, and all the

* Among these may be mentioned, the edition of Shakespeare by Johnson and Steevens;

charms and excellencies of our own language.

It cannot therefore be a matter of

surprise, that the publication of the

Poems attributed to Rowley should

have sounded an alarm amongst us, and

roused the active speculations of every

votary to antiquity, science and poetry.

We already know the various success

with which this contest has been carried

on, and the respectable names which

have been engaged in it. The books

which have been composed on this sub-

ject are numerous, of great learning and

ingenuity; but those of the highest

estimation are perhaps of a bulk rather

too formidable and replete with erudi-

tion too abstruse, to attract general atten-

tion; Mr. Warton's History of English
Poetry; Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, by Mr.
Tyrwhitt; Beaumont and Fletcher by Mr.
Colman; and the Relics of Ancient Poetry by
Dr. Percy.

tion.

tion. It is therefore my intention in this place to deliver with the utmost fidelity, accuracy and conciseness in my power, *the principal Arguments of Internal Evidence*, which have been urged FOR and AGAINST the authenticity of the Poems in question. I shall give them divested of the illustrations they have received, as the various topics introduced would require volumes to discuss them; and as they have already been treated in those books to which the curious reader may easily have recourse.

THOSE who maintain that the Poems attributed to Rowley, are the production of the eighteenth and not of the fifteenth century, and that they were composed by Thomas Chatterton, support their opinion by the following arguments. They contend, in regard to,

STYLE,

STYLE, COMPOSITION and SENTIMENT:

That, these Poems exhibit such a perfection in all the different departments of good composition, as must have been the result of a long establishment of the arts and habits of writing; and *that* the stanzas have such a brilliancy as did not appear in our poetry till the middle of the present century. *That*, our old English poets are minute and particular; do not deal in abstraction and general exhibition, but dwell on realities. *That*, even in the narrative or descriptive, the writer of these Poems adopts ideal terms and artificial modes of telling a fact, and too frequently falls into metaphor, metaphysical imagery, and incidental personification. *That*, his propensity to personification is indulged to a great extent, and some of his allegorical personages are delineated on too large a scale for the simplicity of a remote period, and are often superior to those of

Sackville

Sackville and Spenser. *That*, There is no regular tragedy in the English language extant, printed prior to that entitled *Gorboduc*. *That*, Superiority of genius never yet produced a perfect model in the infancy of composition. *That* Poetry, like other sciences, has its gradual accessions and improvements, is influenced by the condition of society, assumes accidental and arbitrary forms, and is subject to new and peculiar modifications. *That*, A continued tenour of disparity, not so much in the stile as in the sentiment, is a striking characteristic of the old English poetry, and that the bad predominates. *That*, Our ancient poets abound in unnatural conceptions, strange imaginations, capricious extravagancies, and even in the most ridiculous inconsistencies, which are not discoverable in these poems. *That*, They abound with modern words and modern formularies of expression, even with whole lines and paragraphs not to be distinguished from

the compositions of the present day; and, *That*, the Transcriber has modernized so much of the ancient verses, (if ever there were any) as to leave very little of the original.

As to METRE, they are of opinion; *That*, The stanza of the old English poets is most commonly formed of lines of equal feet, with an uniform recurrence of the same systematic alternation of rhyme; but that in these poems we sometimes find that devious and irregular measure called the Pindaric, which was never known till Cowley's time. *That*, The stanza in which *Ælla*, *Godwin*, the *Tournament* and other poems in this collection are written, consists of ten lines constructed of two quatrains rhyming alternately, and closing with an Alexandrine, of which we have no specimen in *Chaucer*, or *Lydgate*, or *Gower*, and that neither of them ever close with an Alexandrine. *That*, *Spenser* first extended

tended the old octave stanza to nine verses, closing with the Alexandrine, to which Prior afterwards added a tenth line, preserving the Alexandrine close; which last poet they conceive to have been the model to the author of the poems in question, in this particular. *That*, The truth of accent, or legitimacy of cadence which uniformly marks the termination of the lines, and which prevails in these poems, is far superior to that of all the supposed Rowley's cotemporaries. *That*, There are no polysyllabic terminations of the verse with which our ancient poets abound; and lastly, *That*, the rythmical harmony is totally different from theirs.

As to ANCIENT LANGUAGE, they think; *That*, The ancient language of these poems is affected and unnatural, and that antiquated expressions are engrafted on the present modes of speech. *That*, The diction and versification are

at perpetual variance, as the author is sometimes as smooth and mellifluous as Dryden and Pope, and yet more obscure and inexplicable than Gower or Chaucer. *That*, The author of these poems appears to have borrowed his language from glossaries and etymological English lexicons, and not from life and practice. *That*, we observe in these poems a factitious ancient diction, at once obsolete and heterogeneous, anomalous in every respect, such as could never have been in use at any æra of antiquity; such as is not transmitted by any ancient English author; and part of which most certainly would have been almost as little understood three centuries ago as at present.

As to HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS, and the LEARNING contained in the Poems, they apprehend; *That*, These are by no means of so recondite a nature as many have maintained; but that Chatterton might have been

been supplied with such information from books by no means uncommon, such as Hollingshed, Fox, Fuller's Church History, and others of a similar nature. *That*, Deep learning has been mistaken for general reading. *That*, In these poems there is no Gothic learning, such as the the pedantry of a priest in the fifteenth century could have exhibited; no allusions to the classics of the dark ages, as Aristotle, Boethius, the Fathers, &c. whereas our ancient writers are perpetually shewing their small stock of learning by quotation in season and out of season. *That*, Though these poems abound with beautiful sentences and illustrations of morality, yet there is no *Religion* in them, that is, no prolix devotional episodes which mark the poetry of Rowley's age. *That*, They are not interspersed with texts of scripture, and addresses to the saints and the Holy Virgin, but to such allegorical divinities as truth, content and others of Pagan original.

That, There are no allusions to old romances, such as the achievements of chivalry, Arthur's round table, Sir Tristram or Charlemagne with his twelve peers, which were the favourite and eternal topics of allusion in this period. *That*, The Greek language was either not taught, or not cultivated in England in Edward the Fourth's reign, and that it would be difficult to prove that the supposed Rowley could have seen the Iliad of Homer, either in the original or in a prose translation, and yet it is conceived that the author of these poems had no inconsiderable knowledge of Homer's works. *That*, If such a poet as Rowley had really existed, he could not have been neglected or forgotten for so long a time, and that some cotemporary writer would have taken notice of him; and finally, that the supposition that such a collection of poems should subsist only in one copy, and that too unseen,

unknown, nor ever once transcribed for so long a period, is incredible.

AS TO THE COMPARISON OF CHATTERTON'S OWN POEMS WITH THOSE ATTRIBUTED TO ROWLEY, they think; *That*, The boasted inequality of the former is by no means to be allowed. *That*, If there is an inequality, yet the same hand appears in both; and this inequality is easy to be accounted for, as Chatterton lavished all his powers, when in a state of ease and unembarrassed in his circumstances, on the counterfeit Rowley, but that his Miscellanies were the offspring of Indigence, Inconvenience and Distraction.

THE Advocates FOR *The Authenticity* of the Poems attributed to Rowley, argue to the following effect:

AS TO STYLE, COMPOSITION and SENTIMENT, they conceive; *That*, Though these
poems

poems certainly exhibit such an uniformity of excellence, as is rarely, or rather never to be found in the works now extant written in the fifteenth century; yet, when we compare any composition with another of the same or a prior age, the difference subsisting is not always a difference resulting from time, but often from situation, taste and judgment. *That*, A perfect model may be produced even in the infancy of composition, as such an instance is actually to be found in the literary annals of the most learned nation that ever existed. *That*, Though we may have no regular English tragedy extant, printed prior to *Gorboduc*, yet it does not therefore follow, that no one ever was written, though from peculiar circumstances it might never have been published. *That*, Even allowing all the absurdities, inconsistencies, disparities, and every other defect in our ancient English authors, which have

have been so forcibly displayed and urged, yet, that perfect taste and judgment, the habits of discrimination, of selection and rejection, are the result of long experience in the art of writing; and that such taste and judgment is exhibited in these poems, as it is impossible could have been attained by a youth of Chatterton's age, situation and circumstances, or by any young man whatsoever, at so early a period of life. *That,* It is by no means probable that Chatterton made such great and frequent alterations, as entirely to have changed the substance of the poems, or the formation of the verse, but that what he did, proceeded from a necessity of supplying what was deficient, or from conjecture when the words were not sufficiently legible in the ancient manuscript.

As to METRE, they are of opinion;
That, In all languages the modes and
 measures of verse were originally in-
 vented

vented and adopted from accidental circumstances, and according to the various taste of the various authors of eminence in succeeding periods. *That*, Some measures, from a conceived propriety in them, though wholly arbitrary, have been assigned to great and lofty subjects, such as the heroic and the dramatic, and others again to inferior subjects, such as the elegiac and pastoral. *That*, Very early in the English Poetry, there are instances of a great variety of measures used by authors, some prior to, and others cotemporary with the supposed Rowley, such measures as the octave stanza formed from the Ottava Rima of the Italians, the seven-lined stanza, or Richm Royal, the deca-syllabic and octo-syllabic couplet, and the stanza of ten lines used by Chaucer in one of his smaller poems. *That*, It is by no means improbable, that Rowley might have introduced the Alexandrine verse at the
close

close of the stanza, though he was not the inventor of that species of verse, which was used by Pierce Plowman in his visions. *That*, The poly-syllabic close of the verse, and the falling of the rhyme on the penultima or ante-penultima syllable is not so very common among our ancient authors as has been asserted. *That*, Though the uniformity of the rhyme in Rowley's verse and the continuance of the harmonic cadence are certainly superior to the productions of his age; yet, that our ancient poets furnish abundant instances of modern cadences and harmonious lines, though thinly scattered in proportion to the bulk of their writings: which circumstance however demonstrates what may be called a *capability* in our language at a very early period. *That*, In all the annals of the Poetry of all modern nations, the English, Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese, there is absolutely no such composition extant as a
Tragedy

Tragedy written throughout in any one of the various stanzas above-mentioned, supported regularly and without intermission, (save in the Introduction to the Minstrel's Songs) except the Tragedy of *Ælla* in the ten-lined stanza. *That*, From the arbitrary origin of all measures, it by no means follows, *because* neither Gower, nor Chaucer, nor Lydgate, nor their cotemporaries ever used the ten lined stanza with the rhymes disposed like Rowley's and closing with an Alexandrine, that *therefore* neither Rowley nor any other author of taste in that age, could not or did not either adopt or invent it.

AS TO ANCIENT LANGUAGE they conceive; *That*, The Poems of Rowley are written in a provincial dialect, according to the idiom of the people, in whose country the author resided and was probably born. *That*, the inflexion and orthography of words in so remote a period is a matter of very great uncertainty.

That

That, the grammar of the ancient English language affords many instances of want of precision. *That*, Many words objected to, as not existing in any author whatsoever but Rowley, are actually found in other writers, some prior to, some cotemporary with, and some posterior to his age; all of which the diligence of future commentators may probably discover. *That*, Many of those words cannot be found in those glossaries and dictionaries to which Chatterton had access. *That*, Chatterton has actually given a false interpretation of many terms in these poems. *That*, There is no ground for supposing that he coined these words without an absurdity. *That*, As to the insertion of some words in these poems, prior to the supposed Rowley's age, it is no more than has been customary with all poets in all ages and nations. *That*, As to modern phrases and words, some of them were necessarily introduced by Chatterton to supply the chasms wherever the originals
were

were deficient, and that even most of these modern terms may be paralleled in ancient authors. *That*, As to the language being so very intelligible, Authors prior to and some cotemporary with Rowley, furnish many instances of as great ease and fluency as in the present age; in particular, his cotemporary Lydgate *throughout* his writings.

As to HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS, and the LEARNING contained in these Poems, they are of opinion; *That*, These poems abound with much uncommon and recondite erudition, which, upon sober examination, appears to have been impossible for a youth of Chatterton's age, situation and circumstances to have attained, and could only have been the lot of a very superior scholar. *That*, This learning cannot be resolved into the idea of general reading, but must have been drawn from the original sources of information; in particular that many names of the Saxon *Earls* or *Comites*,
men-

mentioned in the Battle of Hastings are to be found in no historian now extant, and are only discoverable in the Doomsday book, whose authority cannot be questioned, and to which Chatterton doubtless could not have had recourse. *That*, The Greek language was cultivated in the reign of Edward the fourth, and prior to that period in England, as may be shewn from undoubted authority, and that the works of Homer and Xenophon, to instance no others, were then read. *That*, Many works of excellence in different languages, have been buried among dust and manuscripts for ages, till some fortunate circumstance has brought them forth to light. *That*, Thousands of learned and able men in all ages have lived and died in obscurity, of the world unknowing and unknown, either from choice, or some peculiarity attending their situation. *That*, As learning in those dark ages was principally confined to ecclesiastics, there is no absurdity

furdity in the idea of Rowley's proficiency in the Greek language, *if* it be necessary to suppose that the author of these poems must have been acquainted with the works of Homer.

As to A COMPARISON OF THE POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO ROWLEY WITH THOSE WRITTEN BY CHATTERTON, they conceive; *That*, There is so great an inequality between them, that it is impossible for them to have been the work of the same author. *That*, The poems of Rowley are uniformly supported in every attribute of just and legitimate composition; whereas in those by Chatterton, though there are many bright and ingenious thoughts in no inelegant versification, yet that the whole are composed in so vague and desultory a manner, with such mistakes in mythology and historical allusions, with such a want of design and regularity of conduct in every part, as mark a very inferior

ferior person as a writer and as a scholar.* *That*, Any one who seriously reflects on the nature of composition and of the powers of the human mind, must easily perceive the source from whence these errors and inequalities sprung. *That*, To speak of Chatterton's having composed the Poems in dispute, when in a state of ease and unembarrassed in his circumstances, is to speak of a time which never was experienced by that unfortunate and ingenious youth; and finally, *That*, Every great author has a manner peculiar to himself, both in style and sentiment, and that no adequate reason can be assigned, that the author of the Poems attributed to Rowley, *could* have been the author of The Miscellanies, and of many other similar

* Sunt omnia Adolescentis, non tam re et maturitate, quam spe et expectatione laudati.

Cicero Orator. Sect. 30.

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productions of Chatterton hitherto unpublished.

WHAT have now been laid before the reader, appear to be the *Principal Arguments* which the learned Advocates of either opinion have advanced in support of their several positions. It will easily be perceived that each of them might have been extended to a considerable length; but it seemed to me, whatever it might have been to others, a desideratum in this affair, that rather the sum and substance of the whole should be comprized in as few words as possible, and exhibited at one view. There are other minuter considerations which the fertility of commentators will suggest from every page of such singular compositions as the Poems before us. But this would have been a boundless pursuit, and foreign to the design of this Essay. I trust that any one may now
with

with little difficulty and expence of time, review the principal arguments which I have just presented to the reader detached from each other, and unembarrassed with ideas of less moment.

Every man is partial to his own inventions; and is disposed to embrace those arguments as of the greatest efficacy, which he fancies he himself had previously discovered. This indeed is eminently true in a Controversy of this nature, in which, upon every hypothesis, ideas can never be wanting, and will require great discrimination and arrangement.

It is necessary to have an accurate view of the several component parts of any subject, and of their relation to the whole and to each other, before we can pronounce upon its merits. This in any case requires patient investigation, whose slow and silent operations seldom
fail

fail of success: but how few will submit to labour and unwearied attention. When any subject becomes fashionable, and is submitted to public discussion, we must expect adventurers daily to arise, and the press will groan under its burthen. It was probably a consideration of this nature which prompted a most ingenious writer and deep observer of mankind, to compose a chapter in which it is shewn, that it is possible for an Author not to write the worse, for having some previous knowledge of the subject, about which he is to treat.

However, the diversity of opinion among men, should above all things recommend to us caution, charity and diffidence; since the number of understandings formed to explore any latent truth, is comparatively small. The real obscurity indeed of many subjects is such, as often obliges the greatest men,
after

after their utmost efforts, to acknowledge that the result of all their speculations amounts but to this, that they know a little less than the rest of mankind. Still we are infinitely obliged to those who will add their assistance to the common cause of Literature in whatever department, as all arts have a powerful, though often unperceived, connection with each other.

after their utmost efforts, a considerable
part of the weight of all the proceedings
rests on the shoulders of the few known
individuals, who have the right of admission.
We are the first to object to this, and to
a still further extension of the common cause
of literature in whatever department, as
all are here represented, though often
unconsciously connected with each other.

THE HISTORY OF THE

ARTS AND MANUFACTURES

OF THE KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN

IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

By J. H. P. ...
...
...
...
...
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...

SECTION III,

REMARKS ON SOME PARTICULAR ARGUMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN ADVANCED, AND THE CONCLUSION.

Le *Saturnien* & le *Syrien* s'épuiserent alors
en conjectures ; mais après beaucoup de Rai-
sonnemens, fort ingénieux et fort incertains,
IL EN FALLÛT REVENIR AUX FAITS.

Voltaire *Micromegas*. Chap. 2.

C O N T E N T S

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SECTION THE THIRD.

The Power of Genius—Chatterton considered as an Impostor—His irregular Life, whether any objection to his being the Author of Rowley's Poems—On the Greek Language being understood in the Age of Rowley—Whether Superiority of Genius ever produced a perfect model in the infancy of Composition—What may be concluded from a comparison of the Poems attributed to Rowley with those of the same supposed date and others of modern composition—Additional thoughts on External Evidence—Conclusion resulting from the whole Enquiry.

REMARKS, &c.

SECTION III.

AS I hope, that I have now produced every thing material in the various arguments which the Advocates of either opinion in this controversy have enforced; it is by no means unnatural to consider some few of them, and to lay before the Reader, what seems to me, a just conclusion from the whole. I am not conscious of having suppressed any of the proofs which tend to establish either part; and I have given the naked arguments, divested of those ample illustrations which they have received, and unsupported by the names of the learned authors who first advanced them. I therefore

therefore am induced to think, that there is at least a point of view from which the curious spectator may contemplate the intire structure. And here, what Mr. Locke recommends to those who are willing to conduct their minds in the way of reason, is not wholly inapplicable, or unworthy of our serious attention. " Where a Truth, (says he,) is
 • " made out by one demonstration, there
 " needs no further Enquiry; but in
 " Probabilities, where there wants demonstration to establish the truth
 " beyond doubt, there it is not enough
 " to trace one argument to its source,
 " and observe its strength or weakness;
 " but all the arguments after having
 " been so examined on both sides, must
 " be laid in balance one against another,
 " and upon the whole the understanding
 " determine its assent."*

* Locke's Conduct of the Understanding.
 Sect. 7.

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There are some few select arguments, on which I shall bestow a cursory notice, and present them to the reader's consideration.

Those who contend that the Poems are a forgery, resolve all objections into the strength and power of Chatterton's genius. I think it should be considered, that it is necessary to distinguish what is extraordinary from what is impossible. For though it is hard to assign any limit to the operations of the mind, yet the most vivid intellect is found to be progressive; and the power of Judgement, that power which separates, rejects and combines, is seldom or never exerted in its full excellence, but at an age somewhat advanced, and is then, I believe, the last effort of genuine abilities. I have exalted ideas of what is called Genius; but I have exalted ideas also of the Understanding; of the province
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of Reason, as well as of the faculty of Fancy.

It is also with some surprise, that I hear Chatterton spoken of as an Impostor in general, without one qualifying circumstance. If he was one, he was of such a singular nature as this world never before saw. Here is a specific Impostor, one of the first Poets, (I mean upon the supposition of his being the Author of Rowley's Poems) that any age ever knew, who did not reach his eighteenth year ere he expired; a boy of acknowledged vanity, yet refusing to gratify it in an honourable manner, and eagerly grasping at it when scarce worth the having; constantly denying, except in the single instance of the first Part of the Battle of Hastings, the fact where-with he is now charged, and that, without one motive of interest, without a prospect of reputation, or of raising himself

self to fortune. I cannot resolve all these circumstances into one general turn, a singularity of temper; I must have some adequate cause; I must perceive the agreement and disagreement of ideas before I acknowledge the power of truth. Surely, we may say with the learned Huet; "*Quæ facti gratia, quæ merces in re literariâ, unde quæstus nullus, nulla viro alienum nomen usurpanti, suum dissimulanti gloria ?*"

It has been observed, that it was rather unfortunate for Chatterton, that Lauder's infamous attempt on Milton, and other literary frauds, had been canvassed so lately, as to infuse suspicions into the minds of Readers. For my own part, I esteem it a very fortunate circumstance; for who can wish that his fellow-creatures should be imposed upon, or become the dupes of unexa-

* Huet. *Demonst. Evan.* V. i. p. 19, ed. 8vo.

mined doctrines, or impudent assertions. Even errors themselves in important subjects cease to be dangerous, from the very moment it is permitted to contradict them. For, as a principal cause of Error lies in wrong measures of Probability; as soon as an ingenuous mind seriously disposes itself to sift and examine the grounds of knowledge and the nature of things as they are in themselves; it rarely fails, by gradual advances and continued diligence, to attain the end of all its pursuits, the discovery of Truth.

It has been objected, that a Youth of such dissolute principles and irregular life as Chatterton, never could have been the author of the poems attributed to Rowley, as the dictates of religion, and the precepts of morality with which they abound, must have been too offensive to a mind so constituted. If this were the only argument for the authenticity of Rowley, I fear that
authen-

authenticity could find but few rational advocates. It is not only in the days of indignant Satirist, that we find men, whose sanctity is hypocrisy, and whose morality, licentiousness. Would to God the experience of all Ages and of all Countries did not furnish us with examples of Writers who have displayed the pleasures of Virtue, and even the awful doctrines of Religion, with all the energy and colouring of genuine Piety, while the whole secret tenour of their lives, has been one continued disgrace upon those doctrines which they so openly avowed, and so ably illustrated. This argument should not have been insisted on so vehemently; it may be ridiculed, it may be confuted. I hope however, that a justly celebrated writer has passed too severe and unwarrantable a censure upon the whole poetical tribe, (in his late entertaining and very original work) when he numbers the ingenious Mr. West among "the *few Poets*,

to

to whom the Grave needed not to be terrible."*

It has been mentioned, that the Greek language was not understood in England in the age of Rowley, and yet the author of the Poems seems to have been acquainted with the writers in that language. I cannot myself think, that there is any necessity to affirm that any of these compositions, not even the Battle of Hastings, or the song to Ælla, absolutely suppose a previous acquaintance with the works of Homer or Pindar; even if it be allowed, that those classics were then understood in this country. Mr. Warton, in his second Dissertation prefixed to his History of Poetry, has indeed clearly shewn, that we were not ignorant of the language in that period, and much earlier. To what degree of

* Johnson's Lives of the Poets. Vol. 4. p. 316. Ed. 8vo. Life of Gilbert West.

accuracy the language was understood, cannot now be ascertained; and whoever consults Fabricius's *Bibliotheca Græca* and other books of a similar nature, will find little more than general information on the subject, and nothing that is satisfactory. He must undertake a much harder task than I should chuse, who thinks it necessary to prove that any particular priest did, or did not understand Greek in the fifteenth century. As I cannot say that this seems to affect the Poems either way, it would and, I fear, must be but an idle expence of time and labour to pursue it any further.

BUT one question has been proposed, which always appeared to me very curious, and deserves a short disquisition. It is this. "Whether Superiority of Genius ever produced a perfect model in the infancy of composition?" Without entering minutely into the nature of writing, the annals of poetical history

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present us with a most remarkable example. Genius, we know, is peculiar neither to age nor country. The innate powers of the mind doubtless require cultivation, and in the proper season will produce fruits suitable to the labour which has been bestowed upon them. I am not here speaking of an early maturity in a particular person, but only of a country where literature and composition may be regarded as in their infancy. In such a country and in such an age, appeared a Man, who in the vigour of all his glorious faculties, without assistance, without example, gave to the world a WORK, which has been the admiration and model of all succeeding Poets. What conjecture, what reason shall we ever be able to assign, why HOMER, who, as far as Tradition reaches, had no guide, no precursor, should at once, instantaneously burst forth in all the united splendour of poetic excellence.

lence*. That all succeeding generations should have been indebted to him for the art of the narration and the texture of the fable, with all the incidental circumstances which conspire to produce perfection: and finally that he should have clothed the loftiest concep-

* There is a passage in Cicero de Claris Oratoribus, which at first might seem to contradict this opinion. He says; *Nihil est inventum simul et perfectum*: nec dubitari debet, quin fuerint ante Homerum Poetæ; quod ex eis carminibus intelligi potest, quæ apud illum, et in Phæacum, et in procorum Epulis canuntur."—But it may be answered, that a desultory song of a Minstrel, or an *Aoidos* at a Banquet, is a very different thing from the present subject matter. I suppose it is impossible to settle the origin of Poetry in the sense used by Cicero. In this sense Poetry is almost coæval with mankind. It would be idle to take up the Reader's time any further on this point.

tions in a dignity and simplicity of expression yet unrivalled.

We can reason but from what we know. If we appeal to the records of History, no one ever yet disputed with him in priority of time* among his own coun-

* It is needless to mention the scholastic dispute relative to Hesiod's claim in this particular: in the present consideration however, even this Poet would serve for an example: Cowley observes, " His great antiquity is visible through the gravity and *simplicity of his style.*" Cowley's Essay on Agriculture.— I beg leave to add a few words relative to the preservation of ancient authors.—Let any reflecting man seriously consider with himself the manner in which ancient authors have been delivered down to posterity, and of whose authenticity few rational enquirers have presumed to doubt. Let him revolve the mode of their preservation, the scanty materials in those early ages, the uncertain origin

country-men. The greatest Critics of antiquity refer to him as the standard of propriety; not simply as the Founder of the Epic, but with respect to the niceties of language, on the very particles of speech, and on points of which *we* can scarce form an adequate idea. I know not how it was, but Language seems to have proceeded from him prepared and perfected at once.

• Indeed if this single instance were suffered to have its due weight, it would

origin even of letters themselves, the defects of oral tradition, the feeble assistance which art could then supply. Let him call in array before him every circumstance with which the works of Grecian and Roman genius, demanding a perpetuity of existence, have had to struggle; let him extend these ideas in their just dimensions, and he will not instantly or easily reject the truth of any absolute fact, merely because it is *extraordinary*.

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appear rather presumptuous to decide on the date of any author in any tongue, merely from the modern cast of the writing. Since we all have seen and contemplated what Homer effected in the infancy of his language; long, long before that golden period, which the venerable author of *Hermes* (whose loss is deeply felt in the republic of letters) terms with an enthusiastic rapture, THE EFFULGENCE OF GRECIAN GENIUS.*

A COMPARISON has been formed between these Poems and others of the same supposed date, as well as the productions of modern times. Different conclusions have been drawn from hence with respect to their authenticity. As to my own part, I have laboured through many an ancient composition, to observe what was valuable in it,

* *Hermes*. Ch. 5. note g.

either

either in regard to the justness of sentiment, or the harmony of the numbers. But if I speak impartially of the Authors of the age in question, they doubtless will be found *thin sown with ought of profit or delight* : the metre may be legitimate, but it is uncouth ; the subjects are often uninteresting, and the mode of treating them is not unfrequently diffuse and languid. Yet among these remains, valuable still for their antiquity, there are many splendid passages, eminent for diction, for harmony, and the same easy turn of expression which prevails in modern times. This is particularly to be found in some of the works of Lydgate ; who, in this latter respect, is almost as easy to be understood as any writer in the present century. Yet whoever wishes to argue from this consideration in the present case, must take the whole, and not mere detached parts. The truth must be acknowledged ; things must be viewed as they really are in themselves.

It

It must be confessed by an impartial enquirer, that there is nothing absolutely equal to Rowley, in all the records of our ancient poetry : though there are some compositions not altogether dissimilar in some points. Inequality is not the characteristic of this author, whoever he may be : whatever subject is treated in that volume, is marked with the hand of a master, with the enthusiasm of the poet, and the judgment of the critic. The utmost that I should think proper to urge, from harmonious lines and passages now extant in ancient authors, is, that it appears from those passages, that there was at least, what may be termed a *Capability* in our language at that early period. Either our poets did not then sufficiently pursue their point when they had attained a transient excellence ; or their ear was so accustomed to the production of the *è final*, as not to be offended by it, and at other times was perfectly satisfied with the mere numerical scansion of the verse ; or their genius

was

was unequal to the task of uniform perfection, and the efforts of patient and unremitting attention. Those who esteem the Poems of Rowley as authentic, are of opinion, that the powers of this Poet were so great, as to have seized this very *capability* in the language, which I just observed, and by adding to it an extensive erudition and consummate judgment, to have produced such compositions as are indisputably superior to all those of his contemporaries, and appear by no means unworthy of the greatest name in the annals of Poetry.

As to many of the various modern formularies of expression interspersed in these Poems, and to be found in Dryden, Pope, Gray*, or others, doubtless they were inserted by Chatterton either to

* Such as *Clouds of Carnage* from Gray, and other expressions; by the introduction of however which it is to be observed, that the sense or propriety of the several passages is very frequently injured.

please

please his own ear, or to restore some parts which were lost, or in places where the words were difficult to be decyphered. No one can be such an outrageous advocate for their authenticity as not to allow this. Let every argument be considered rationally, according to its own nature; as it often happens, that by straining it further than it will bear, and, as it were, forcing it into the service, it loses even that degree of strength and conviction, which it otherwise would carry with it.

I beg leave to add a few words relative to the External Evidence. As the present Question cannot be called into discussion under legal solemnities as to the truth of the several facts; that confirmation, which is an end of all strife, is not to be had or required of the several witnesses in this cause. The nature of the affair is not of consequence enough, nor is it capable of being treated
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in this manner. All the information which has been received, has been voluntary, and given by persons who cannot be suspected of any interest to deceive. It may be granted, that the testimony even of an honest man is liable to the imperfections of memory, and other human infirmities, especially if delivered at any distance of time after the transaction. Yet in the present case, I would observe, that the principal persons give one and the same consistent account as to the material fact.

It appears to me highly improper and incautious to strive to invalidate plain facts by terming them, THE TALES OF RELATIONS and THE RECOLLECTIONS OF APPRENTICES. If *this method* of debasing and invalidating evidence were to be once introduced and allowed in common life; it must affect the very principles upon which human society is founded, and by which all human affairs are carried on.

on. I mean, if we but for a moment forget, that the credit due to the testimony of any man, does not arise from his civil rank in life, but from the integrity of his character. If *the method*, (and as I would not be misunderstood or misrepresented, I repeat it) if *the method* of treating this subject be found to involve higher concerns; Rowley, and Poetry and Antiquity and Literature are set aside and forgotten.—When I object against *this method* of proceeding, and oppose it with that earnestness which it requires; I am not pleading the cause of Rowley or Chatterton; I am pleading for mankind, for their best, their dearest interests.

To return :—As to the different opinions of the abilities of Chatterton, it is no part whatsoever of the evidence, in my judgment. Some may think him equal to any composition, others may depress his talents beneath their real value;

value; it is not what we think in this or that particular, it is from a combination of the whole, from a collation of circumstances, that we must deduce a regular conclusion.

It is the design of LAW to come to rigid demonstration in all matters of public and private right: yet even there not only positive, but circumstantial evidence must also be admitted, and decisions formed accordingly; inasmuch as we can have no greater evidence than the nature of the thing will allow. Our dearest rights must frequently be determined according to Probability. When we have examined a subject thoroughly and sincerely, we have acted like honest men, and no more is required of us but to acquiesce in the event. I only urge considerations of this nature to those who are engaged in the affair, whatever opinion they now hold, or may hereafter adopt. We cannot indeed expect that
many

many people will give a large portion of their thought or time, either to the fates and fortunes of a Priest in the Fifteenth Century, or of an ingenious Youth in the Eighteenth, or even to the state and progress of the poetical art itself in the early ages.

As I am unwilling to employ more time or words than are absolutely necessary to the illustration of this subject, I shall not consider at large any of the minuter doctrines. I therefore beg leave to lay before the Reader the following CONCLUSION, as the result of my whole Enquiry,

IF the Defenders of the Antiquity and Authenticity of the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, were disposed to admit every *internal* objection which has been urged against them; if all the arguments drawn from the style, composition, allusions,

sions, modern passages, harmony of the numbers, and whatever comes to us in a questionable shape, were supposed true for a moment; if the principles of taste and critical discernment be allowed to operate in full force against their authenticity; still the following considerations are not unworthy of our notice: these at least must still be true, unless the foundations of evidence be torn up, and the basis of all legal transactions be done away.

For from these large concessions, (which I cannot think it wholly necessary to be made) it will not follow:

That, THOMAS CHATTERTON was not born at Bristol on the 20th of November, 1752.

That, he was not educated at a Charity School in that City, where the children

dren were taught nothing but to read and write English and cast accompts.

That, he was not in the School under the inspection of the master, from seven o'clock till twelve in the morning, and from one till five, in the evening, during the summer, and in winter, from eight till twelve in the morning, and again, from one till four in the afternoon.

That, he did not continue at Coulston's school from the age of eight years or a little earlier till he was fourteen years and seven months old.

That, he was not at that period *bound apprentice* to Mr. Lambert an attorney at Bristol, with whom, and in whose office he lived till he was seventeen years of age and five months, and thence went to London, where he died unfortunately three months after.

That,

That, he was not ignorant of the French, Saxon and Latin Tongues*.

That, the interpretations given by Chatterton to the ancient terms in the Poems attributed to Rowley, were not taken from Kersey's Dictionary and Speght's Glossary to Chaucer, since he was not in possession of Skinner's Etymologicon, and of Benson's Vocabularium Anglo-Saxonicum, but for a few days, which he returned to the gentleman of whom he borrowed them, professing that they were of no kind of service to him, as being written in Latin.

That, he did not bring the Tragedy of Ælla, the most perfect of all the compositions ascribed to Rowley, to Mr. Catcott, when he was between sixteen and seventeen years of age.

* To be acquainted with a few terms or words in any Language, can hardly, I suppose, be said to constitute a knowledge of it.

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That,

That, he did not constantly deny his being the author of the Poems attributed to Rowley, (except in that single instance of the first part of the Battle of Hastings) and as constantly acknowledge the Miscellanies in the different magazines, which have since been collected and published in one volume, with his name.

That, there did not exist several ancient parchments from the Chest in Redelift Church, many of which are actually at this instant in Mr. Barrett's possession.

That, the whole of what may be termed Chatterton's Literary Life, did not consist of about three years and a half, in which period he produced all the Poems attributed to Rowley, and that volume of Miscellanies confessedly his own, besides a large collection yet unpublished.

IF all, or even more than these plain propositions are incontrovertibly true, if we cannot be said to be misled by giving our assent to them ; I leave it to the Reader to draw what inference he pleases, in regard to the *probability* or *possibility* of Chatterton's being the Author of the Poems in question. I wish however that it may be an inference deduced from a due, fair, and impartial examination of all and each of the circumstances, without any regard to the authority of the learned writers of the different opinions.

It is not for me to judge how far any man's speculations may extend ; but finding in myself nothing to be truer, than that the very existence of society is preserved, and every valuable interest maintained, by a confidence grounded on the testimony of our fellow-creatures in every concern ; I gratefully accept and acquiesce in their voluntary and genuine information, and bind up my reason to

make such inductions as are accordant to *matter of fact*; though some seeming difficulties should occur, for which I may be unable to account.* For I conceive, that when any question is about a matter of fact, it is begging that question to bring, as a proof of it, an hypothesis, which is the very thing in dispute.

But it is far from my design or inclination to press any doctrine, or force down its belief with an indecent vehemence; or to think the worse of any man's understanding, who views arguments in a different light from myself; particularly on a subject like the present. I only ask for mutual toleration and candour of discussion, and that every man should be allowed to judge for himself,

* A celebrated Philosopher justly observes, that those who require a reason for every thing indiscriminately, destroy the essence of Reason itself. ΑΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΖΗΤΟΥΝΤΕΣ ΛΟΓΟΝ, ΑΝΑΙΠΟΤΕΙ ΛΟΓΟΝ. A remark this, worthy of all acceptance,

fairly

fairly and in earnest. I will not repeat what I have said in former parts of this Essay, but leave it to the judgment of the intelligent reader, to whom I willingly submit these pages, without a thought of entering any further in the controversy. Errors I may have committed, but without intention ; opinions I may have controverted, but without asperity. Subjects like these may be drawn out, till their very continuity is an argument for withholding our labour. Having therefore now given that degree of attention to this singularly curious subject, which it seemed to me to deserve ; I here close my Enquiry, from which I have at least received as much pleasure and satisfaction as any mere literary question can afford. As such I took it up ; as such I lay it down.

But if, after all that has been, or may possibly be yet advanced, it shall still appear to the generality of mankind, that CHATTERTON is the real author of the
mas-

masterly compositions in dispute ; if not only the reputation of ROWLEY, but even his very existence must be done away ; I, who confess myself among the number of the old Bard's deluded votaries, may at least be allowed to pay him my tribute of veneration, and to address this supposed Father of harmonious English Poetry, in the expressive strain of the great Mantuan,

Salve, SANCTE PARENS, iterum salvete recepti
Nequicquam Cineres !



F I N I S.

C O N T E N T S

O F

E A C H S E C T I O N.

S E C T. I.

E X T E R N A L E V I D E N C E.

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S E C T

S E C T. II.

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S E C T

S E C T. III.

REMARKS ON SOME PARTICULAR ARGUMENTS ;

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